

# Working with Criminal Justice Populations



## Presenter:

**Steven T. McFarland, Director**

**Task Force on Faith-Based and Community  
Initiatives**

**Office of the Deputy Attorney General**

**U.S. Department of Justice**

**Washington, DC**

# Working with Criminal Justice Populations



## Voucherized social services provide freedom of choice:

- Choice increases supply of service providers
- Choice increases competition
- Choice increases freedom for FBOs

# Working with Criminal Justice Populations



## Successes of Prisoner Reentry Programs

Success is measured by re-arrest, re-incarceration, job placement, job retention, sobriety and drug-free urine.

### Too early to know results:

- President's Prisoner Reentry Initiative (PRI)
  - Awarded November 2005
- Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative (SVORI)
  - Five-year multi-site evaluation in progress (data collection began in 2003)



# Working with Criminal Justice Populations



## Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative (SVORI)

- Created in 2003 by a federal consortium (DOJ, DOL, HUD) to address the challenge of recidivism on the community level
- \$100 million to 69 grantees (totaling 89 programs)
  - Primary use of funding was to fill service “gaps” or expand existing programs rather than develop new programming

# Working with Criminal Justice Populations



## SVORI

- **Primary focus of SVORI programs:**

- **Employment services (64%)**
- **Community integration (49.4%)**
- **Substance abuse (48%)**
- **Education/Skills building (40.4%)**

*(Cont'd)*

# Working with Criminal Justice Populations



## SVORI

### Faith-Based Organization (FBO) involvement

#### Example: The Michigan Department of Corrections

- The MDOC reentry program is supported by Wings of Faith, which provides case management for all reentry clients, both prior to and following release.

*\*Notable feature: Wings of Faith and the parole officer are co-located in a one-stop center which also houses numerous local nonprofit service providers, facilitating more immediate access to services.*



# Working with Criminal Justice Populations



## SVORI

### Faith-Based Organization (FBO) involvement

- Programs provided in high percentages both pre- and post-release (>50% total):
  - Mentoring
    - **Lesson learned:** Mentors need to be matched with inmates and develop relationship of trust *before release*.
  - Housing
  - Counseling
  - Peer support groups
  - Financial support/emergency assistance

(Cont'd)

# Working with Criminal Justice Populations



## SVORI

### Faith-Based Organization (FBO) involvement

- Programs less likely to be offered by FBOs, pre-and post-release:
  - Vocational training
  - Needs/risk assessment
  - Mental health services
  - Assistance obtaining identification

(Cont'd)



# Working with Criminal Justice Populations



## SVORI

### Faith-Based Organization (FBO) involvement

*Lesson learned:* FBOs are reluctant to seek federal grants because of the strings attached. Grantees must abide by specific requirements, such as separation in time or venue between their religious teaching and the funded social service.

- ***Voucherized reentry component in Gang “Super Sites” Demonstration project***

# Working with Criminal Justice Populations



## SVORI

### Other program examples

- **Community-based**

Pennsylvania Department of Corrections in partnership with Greater Erie Community Action Committee

- **Law enforcement**

Kansas Department of Corrections in partnership with local law enforcement

- **Video-conferencing**

Maine Reentry Network in partnership with community-based organization staff

(Cont'd)

# Working with Criminal Justice Populations



## SVORI - Evaluation

**One of the largest evaluation studies funded by the NIJ, the SVORI evaluation includes:**

- Implementation assessment of all grantees
- Dissemination plan
- Cost-benefit analysis
- Impact evaluation (focused on a limited number of sites)



# Working with Criminal Justice Populations



## SVORI - Evaluation

### Evaluation focus:

1. Have these programs accomplished the overall goals of the initiative?
2. What are the relative costs and benefits of the programs?
3. What are the challenges the SVORI programs face?

# Working with Criminal Justice Populations



## SVORI - Evaluation Challenges

- “Success” must be carefully defined and measured

**Lesson learned:** Defining recidivism as re-arrest creates a perverse incentive for Parole Officers *NOT* to revoke parole and to overlook violations lest the agency’s success rate be lowered.

- SVORI programs are small – 38% had enrolled 50 people or fewer

# Working with Criminal Justice Populations



## SVORI - Evaluation Challenges

- **Enrollment barriers:**

1. Stringent eligibility criteria
2. Facility/agency transfer policies
3. Offenders being identified too late
4. Inaccurate or unavailable release dates

*(Cont'd)*



# Working with Criminal Justice Populations



## SVORI - Evaluation Challenges:

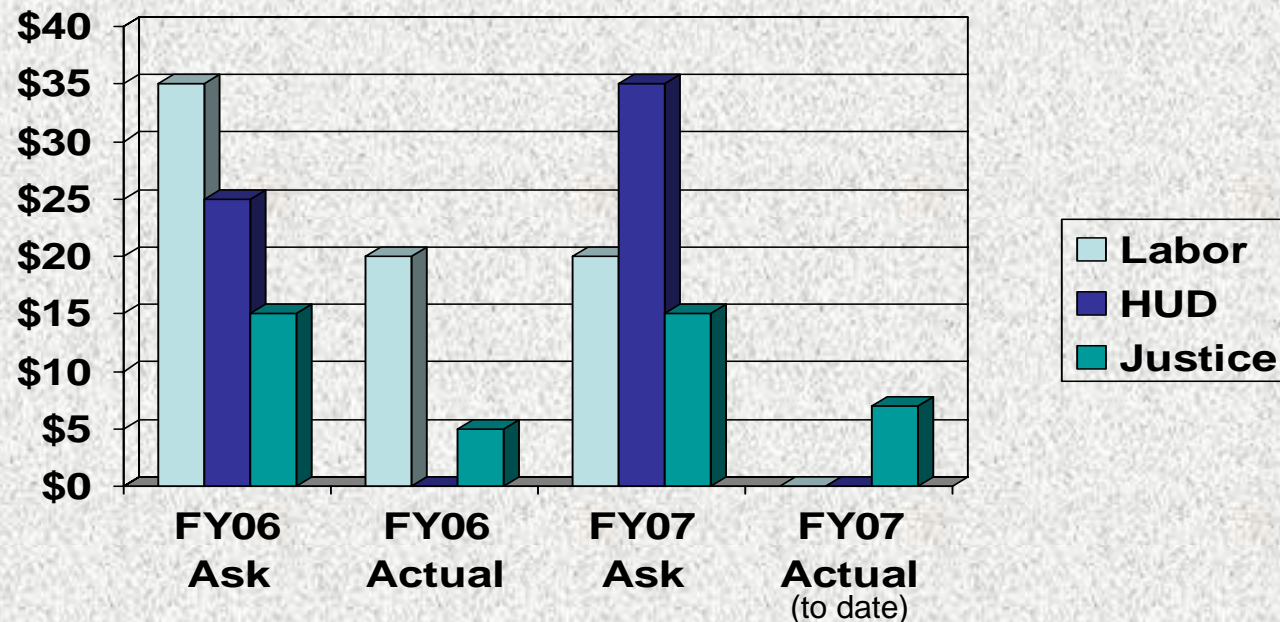
- Implementation barriers (as reported by greater than 1/3 of the SVORI program directors):
  1. Insufficient staff available
  2. Inadequate funding for reentry
  3. Poor communication within agencies
  4. Turf battles
  5. High staff turnover

# Working with Criminal Justice Populations



## Challenges for Prisoner Reentry Programs: Future funding – Shrinking Budgets

- SVORI Funding expired June 2006
- PRI Funding:



(Cont'd)

# Working with Criminal Justice Populations



## Challenges for Prisoner Reentry Programs:

<b>PRI Funding</b>	<b>Labor</b>	<b>HUD</b>	<b>Justice</b>
FY06 WH request	\$35M	\$25M	\$15M
FY06 Appropriation	\$20M	0	\$5M
FY07 WH request	\$20M	\$35M	\$15M
FY06 Appropriation (as of 7/06)	\$0	\$0	<\$7M

(Cont'd)



# Working with Criminal Justice Populations



## Challenges for Prisoner Reentry Programs:

- Evaluations require significant funding, time, and cooperation.

### **\*Funding\***

SVORI:  
\$12 million

### **\*Time\***

SVORI:  
5 years

### **\*Cooperation\***

SVORI:  
Thousands of  
subjects

*(Cont'd)*

# Working with Criminal Justice Populations



## Challenges for Prisoner Reentry Programs: \*Time\*

**The SVORI evaluation is a 5 year project:**

- Data is being collected through in-person, computer-assisted interviews with about 4,000 prisoners.
- Data collection consists of four in-person interviews.
- Baseline interviews are being conducted in 150 prisons and juvenile detention facilities.
- Follow-up interviews are conducted at three, nine, and fifteen months following release.

*(Cont'd)*

# Working with Criminal Justice Populations



## Challenges for Prisoner Reentry Programs:

### **\*Cooperation\***

- Achieving target of 4,200 baseline interviews, as well as identifying and recruiting more than 2,000 comparison subjects
- Gaining access to the subjects for baseline interview data collection
- Retaining subjects for three waves of follow-up from populations that are difficult to track and may be hospitalized or incarcerated
- Analyzing data from across a diversity of programs around the country



# Working with Criminal Justice Populations



## Challenges for Prisoner Reentry Programs: Court challenges – Iowa

A faith-based program in an Iowa prison, partially funded by the State, was ruled unconstitutional by a Federal judge in Des Moines on June 2, 2006.

*Issue: Does the First Amendment ban a state government from offering special incentives to those prisoners who will commit to an intensive religious training program, without offering a comparable nonreligious alternative?*

# Working with Criminal Justice Populations



## Challenges for Prisoner Reentry Programs: Court challenges – Iowa

The Iowa decision does *not* threaten the future of the faith- and character-based units operated by the Federal Bureau of Prison's Life Connections Program (LCP) because they differ from the Iowa program (IFI) in significant ways:

- LCP offers a comparable, non-religious (character-based) therapeutic program, whereas IFI does not
- LCP does not offer incentives to participate
- LCP allows participants to opt out of religious services
- LCP does not pay inmates for time spent in religious programming

(Cont'd)

# Working with Criminal Justice Populations



## Challenges for Prisoner Reentry Programs: Court challenges – Iowa

The Iowa decision is *not* relevant to the legality of the President's Faith-Based and Community Initiative's mission to eliminate obstacles to the equal participation by community organizations in providing secular social services.

- The FBCI does not set aside money for FBOs.
- Direct Federal funds cannot be used for inherently religious activities
- Beneficiaries of Federally-funded social services may not be coerced to attend religious programming.



# **For Assistance, contact:**



**The Task Force on Faith-Based and  
Community Initiatives  
U.S. Department of Justice  
[www.ojp.gov/fbci/about.html](http://www.ojp.gov/fbci/about.html)**

**Jana.Hoisington@usdoj.gov  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Rm. 4411  
Washington, D.C. 20530  
(202) 514-2987  
Fax (202) 616-9627**